

Federalist & Antifederalist Positions

Issue	Federalists	Antifederalists	Notes
A Constitution establishing a strong central government	Favored	Opposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chief worry of the Antifederalists was that the states would lose influence with the growth in the national government's power
Power of thirteen states	Favored limiting state power. Argued that Senate (with two representatives per state) adequately represented state interests	Strong supported power and influence of states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local control was key to Antifederalist concept of democracy. This issue would boil up in states' rights fights in 1800s
Bill of Rights	Not necessary	Supported as essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The absence of a Bill of Rights in the original Constitution was seen as a real threat to individual citizens' liberties
Articles of Confederation	Opposed as ineffectual as a governing document. Congress' power was limited to requesting cooperation from states.	Articles needed to be amended, not abandoned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decision at the Annapolis Convention (1786) to suggest a national convention to modify the Articles proved to be crucial.
Size of the nation	A large republic was seen as the best protection for individual freedoms	Only a small republic could protect rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No experiment in democracy on a scale of America had ever been attempted.
Supporters	Large farmers, merchants, artisans	Small farmers, often from rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only a few wealthy men (Mason and Randolph of Virginia, Gerry of Massachusetts) joined the Antifederalists.

*Based on *The American Journey: A History of the United States* by Goldfield, et al.